

## Message Text

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ORIGIN INR-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSC-05  
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DRAFTED BY INR/RSE:IKULSKI;SPLOSS  
APPROVED BY EUR/RPM:SJLEDOGAR  
INR/RSE:DGRAVES(SUBS)  
INR:PSTODDARD  
EUR/SOV:MLEVITSKY (PHONE)  
S/MS:CKAMMAN  
EUR/RPM:TMSAVAGE  
-----047373 090312Z /62

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY  
INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 117397

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: NATO, UR

SUBJECT: BREZHNEV TRIP TO SOVIET ASIA

REFS: (A) USNATO 3725 (NOTAL), (B) NADA/ASSESSMENT/MAY  
NO. 2/DIA WASH DC/060600Z (NOTAL)

1. PER REFTEL REQUEST, MISSION AUTHORIZED TO CIRCULATE IN  
POLADS FOLLOWING PAPER ON SUBJECT.

2. BEGIN TEXT: BREZHNEV'S VISIT TO SIBERIA

A) BREZHNEV'S EXTRAORDINARY 13-DAY TOUR OF SIBERIA (MARCH  
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28-APRIL 9) WAS EVIDENTLY AIMED AT:

-- DISPLAYING BREZHNEV'S PHYSICAL FITNESS FOR STAYING IN  
THE TOP JOB DESPITE INDICATIONS THAT HIS HEALTH IS UN-  
RELIABLE;

-- ACCELERATING PRODUCTION AND INDUSTRIAL CONSTRUCTION IN  
ONE OF THE USSR'S RICHEST AND MOST UNDEREXPLOITED REGIONS;

-- REAFFIRMING MOSCOW'S CONCERN ABOUT SOVIET DEFENSES ON

THE TROUBLED BORDER WITH CHINA; AND

-- UNDERLINING SOVIET IMPATIENCE AT THE SLOW PACE OF SALT  
NEGOTIATIONS. -

B) BREZHNEV'S FITNESS: EVIDENTLY A MAJOR PURPOSE OF THE JOURNEY WAS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT BREZHNEV IS PHYSICALLY FIT TO RULE, A FACTOR THAT CAME UNDER DOUBT AFTER LAST WINTER'S ILLNESSES AND ABSENCES. THE IDEA FOR BREZHNEV'S LONG RAIL TRIP AND THE CHOICE OF VLADIVOSTOK AS THE PLACE TO ANSWER PRESIDENT CARTER'S WAKE FOREST SPEECH HAVE BEEN ATTRIBUTED TO LEONID ZAMYATIN, NEWLY IN CHARGE OF INTERNATIONAL PROPAGANDA FOR THE KREMLIN.

C) BREZHNEV'S PUBLIC PERFORMANCE WAS MARKEDLY BETTER THAN BEFORE, AS WAS HIS PHYSICAL APPEARANCE, AND HIS POST-TRIP ACTIVITIES HAVE REMAINED ON A HIGH LEVEL. NEVERTHELESS, THERE WERE INDICATIONS THROUGHOUT THE JOURNEY THAT HE WAS HUSBANDING HIS STRENGTH. HIS SPEECHES WERE BRIEF AND HE AVOIDED TRAVEL TO THE MAJOR BAYKAL-AMUR RAILROAD CONSTRUCTION PROJECT, INSTEAD ADDRESSING THE RAILROAD WORKERS ON THE PERIPHERY.

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D) POLITICO-MILITARY ASPECTS: THE PRESENCE OF SOVIET DEFENSE MINISTER USTINOV THROUGHOUT THE TOUR AND OF ADMIRAL GORSHKOV IN VLADIVOSTOK EMPHASIZED THE MILITARY ASPECTS OF THE TRIP. BREZHNEV ALSO: INSPECTED A MISSILE UNIT IN CENTRAL SIBERIA AND PRAISED ITS COMBAT READINESS; VISITED HIS OLD ARMY UNIT NEAR MONGOLIA; VIEWED AN "ALL-ARMS TACTICAL EXERCISE" AT KHABAROVSK, NOT FAR FROM THE BORDER AREA WHERE THE ARMED CLASHES BETWEEN CHINESE AND SOVIET TROOPS OCCURRED IN 1969; AND WATCHED PACIFIC FLEET MANEUVERS AND DELIVERED A MAJOR SPEECH ON THE STATE OF ARMS LIMITATION NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES.

E) BREZHNEV BOARDED THE CRUISER ADMIRAL SENYAVIN IN VLADIVOSTOK BAY TO ECHO ARBATOV'S MESSAGE IN THE MARCH 27 ISSUE OF PRAVDA THAT IT WAS THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S "INDECISION, INCONSISTENCY," AND VACILLATION THAT WAS HOLDING UP CONCLUSION OF SALT II. WHAT WAS NEEDED, HE CONTENTED, WAS AN ACT OF POLITICAL WILL BY THE US TO RESOLVE THE IMPASSE. DESPITE THE EFFORTS OF SALT OPPONENTS, HE ASSERTED, THESE TALKS WERE NOW BACK ON THE NECESSARY VLADIVOSTOK BASIS, AND THE REQUISITE DOCUMENTS WERE "LARGELY AGREED UPON AND THRASHED OUT."

F) THE SETTING SERVED A VARIETY OF PURPOSES, EVEN IF THE MESSAGE WAS NOT NEW.

-- THE PARALLELISM WITH PRESIDENT CARTER'S RECENT MILITARY

VISITS WAS UNMISTAKABLE, AS WAS THE IMPLICIT RESPONSE TO THE WAKE FOREST ADDRESS.

-- AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF MILITARY STRENGTH, BREZHNEV COULD ENDORSE DISARMAMENT AND DETENTE WITHOUT RISKING SUSPICIONS OF WEAKNESS.

-- HE COULD NOT BE ACCUSED OF HEIGHTENING TENSION WITH CHINA EVEN WHILE UNDERSCORING SOVIET MILITARY STRENGTH  
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ON THE SINO-SOVIET FRONTIER.

-- AT THE SAME TIME HE SEEMED TO BE SIGNALING PEKING THAT MOSCOW ALSO COULD PLAY A US CARD.

-- HE FURTHER FLAGGED TO THE WORLD AT LARGE THAT THE USSR HAD VALID SECURITY REQUIREMENTS ON BOTH ITS "WEST AND EAST" BORDERS WHICH HAD TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BY NEGOTIATING PARTNERS.

FURTHERMORE, BREZHNEV'S WARNING ABOUT THE ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPON AS AN OFFENSIVE WEAPON WHICH COULD NOT BE THE SUBJECT OF BARTER INDICATED THAT THE SOVIET CAMPAIGN ON THIS ISSUE WILL CONTINUE DESPITE PRESIDENT CARTER'S DECISION.

G) BREZHNEV TOUCHED ON NO OTHER FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES IN HIS BRIEF DISCOURSE. HIS OVERALL TENOR WAS OPTIMISTIC, BUT A NOTE OF URGENCY WAS UNMISTAKABLE: TWICE HE CALLED FOR REACHING A SALT AGREEMENT QUICKLY. BUT HE MADE CLEAR THAT THE SOVIETS EXPECT THE US TO MEET THEM "HALF WAY" ON THE REMAINING ISSUES.

H) LAGGING OF DEVELOPMENT TEMPO: IN GENERAL, THE TONE OF BREZHNEV'S DOMESTIC RHETORIC DURING HIS 4,300-MILE JOURNEY WAS UPBEAT. HE EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE STATE OF THE SOVIET ECONOMY AND FLATLY REJECTED A CRITICAL REMARK OF LOCAL LEADERS TO THE EFFECT THAT "STILL LITTLE HAS BEEN DONE ABOUT THE HOUSING PROBLEM." WORKERS REPORTEDLY TOLD BREZHNEV THAT THEY WERE PLEASED WITH THEIR EARNINGS AND LIVING CONDITIONS.

I) BUT A FEELING THAT THE TEMPO OF SIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT  
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IS LAGGING TOO FAR BEHIND PLANNED GOALS COULD BE DETECTED BETWEEN THE LINES OF BREZHNEV'S ESSENTIALLY OPTIMISTIC SPEECHES.

-- IN TYUMEN, CENTER OF THE OIL- AND GAS-PRODUCING AREA OF WESTERN SIBERIA, BREZHNEV URGED INCREASED PRODUCTION AND MORE EFFICIENT EXTRACTION PROCESSES.

-- "YOU ARE NOT FULFILLING YOUR PLAN," HE SCOLDED THE LEADERS OF KRASNOYARSK, IN WESTERN SIBERIA, AND THREATENED THAT "THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THAT WILL BE BORNE BY BOTH THE RELEVANT UNION MINISTRIES AND THE REGIONAL LEADERSHIP."

-- AT IRKUTSK, NEAR LAKE BAYKAL, HE PREACHED: "WE NEED TO LEARN TO WORK RHYTHMICALLY, WITHOUT INTERRUPTIONS OR STOPPAGES."

-- AT VLADIVOSTOK, HE RAPPED CENTRAL INDUSTRIALISTS FOR MISMANAGEMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND HELD LOCAL BOSSES TO BE REMISS IN PROVISIONING THE WORKERS, AN OVERSIGHT DRIVING THEM TO SEEK EMPLOYMENT ELSEWHERE.

-- ON THE LAST STOP OF HIS TOUR, KOMSOMOLSK-ON-AMUR, HE UPBRAIDED WORKERS WHO "DO NOT FULFILL THEIR NORMS ... DO NOT TAKE CARE OF NATIONAL PROPERTY ... SHIRK WORK AND PRODUCE SUBSTANDARD GOODS."

J) FOOD SHORTAGES APPARENTLY LED BREZHNEV TO CALL REPEATEDLY FOR LOCAL INCREASES IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE, A POINT ALSO MADE IN THE APRIL 14 ENDORSEMENT OF HIS TRIP BY THE TOP SOVIET BODIES.

K) MUTED ISSUE OF BUREAUCRATIC POWERS: A TERSE NOTICE WAS GIVEN IN THE PRESS ACCOUNT OF BREZHNEV'S MEETING WITH NOVOSIBIRSK OBLAST LEADERS THAT THE LOCAL PARTY BOSS HAD REPORTED ON "THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTER-INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION ENTERPRISES, NOT ONLY WITHIN ONE OBLAST, BUT ALSO BEYOND ITS BOUNDARIES." ASIDE FROM THIS BRIEF REFERENCE TO MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE, NOTHING WAS REALLY SAID ABOUT THE TOPIC IN SOVIET PRESS COVERAGE OF BREZHNEV'S TOUR.

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L) YET, SOVIET LEADERS AND COMMENTATORS HAVE LATELY DWELT ON THE GROSS INADEQUACY OF MANAGEMENT FORMS AND PLANNING PROCEDURES FOR THE TAPPING OF SIBERIAN RESOURCES. BREZHNEV AND KOSYGIN WERE IN BROAD AGREEMENT AT THE 1976 PARTY CO

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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